



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4-25 Infantry Public Affairs)

Two uniforms, two countries, one mission

Iraqi army soldiers and paratroopers from 40th Cav. Reg. (Airborne), 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div., patrol through a town in near southern Baghdad as part of a recon mission of the area Nov. 24.

Mechanics make quick, smooth transition

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2-1 Cavalry Public Affairs

FOB PROSPERITY, Iraq - The 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's team of mechanics took over operations from the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), almost immediately after arriving to

Forward Operating Base Prosperity in Baghdad.

According to Phoenix native Sgt. 1st Class John P. Schulz, the 2nd BSTB's motor sergeant assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, he decided to start their operations as early as possible because that was the way he has always known it to be successful through his other deployments.

"I told them (4th BSTB's mechanics)

we wanted to take over with their guidance," Schulz said. "Those guys need time to get out of here. So, everyone sat back and let us do it."

Schulz credits their smooth transition to his mechanics' eagerness to start their mission.

"They have been outstanding," he said

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Airborne logisticians deliver the goods

By Sgt. Marcus Butler
4-25 ID Public Affairs

FOB KALSU, Iraq - Occupying areas in southern Iraq, the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division's mission success relies heavily on the logistical supply lines between the different areas of operation and dependability of the support battalion delivering the supplies.

Paratroopers from 725th Brigade Support Battalion, did its part of keeping the mission life-line going by conducting a combat logistical convoy, delivering a resupply of fuel, mail, weapon mounts, surveillance equipment and escorting food trailers from FOB Kalsu to FOB Iskan.

"Our mission was to deliv-

er much needed supplies safely to our brother battalion at Iskan," said 1st Lt. William Myrick, convoy commander for this mission.

"The mission ran very smoothly and was an overall success," he added.

"Every set of eyes that we have on the road makes it that much easier for each and every paratrooper to return back safely," said Myrick.

With children waving at the paratroopers as their vehicles passed by, the combat convoy experience is something Spc. Jeremy Kozub will remember for a long time.

A first timer for conducting a combat convoy, Kozub served as a team chief for one of the vehicles in the convoy.

"The experience opened my eyes to how truly blessed



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4-25 Public Affairs)

Iraqi children greet paratroopers as their convoy passes through an Iraqi town on a combat logistical convoy to Forward Operating Base Iskan.

we are to be Americans," he said. "Even with the imminent dangers that we face every time

we leave the walls of our FOB, it is worth it to help the people of Iraq."

**Arabic Phrase
of the Day**
*a ruf bass kali-
maat qaliila*

**Defined: I
know only a
few words**

Iraq 3-Day Forecast



Today

High: 68
Low: 41



Tomorrow

High: 65
Low: 39



Wednesday

High: 68
Low: 39

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Know your benefits!

Special pay given for a tough job

By Pfc. Shea Butler
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Loot. Benjamins. Wampum. Greenbacks. Cold, hard cash. It doesn't matter what you call it. What matters, is if you are getting enough of it.

Soldiers here owe it to themselves and their loved ones to know exactly how much they should be getting paid while deployed in Iraq.

A large portion of Soldier's pay increase while in theater comes from hostile fire pay. Hostile fire pay is specified at a rate of \$225 per month for all Soldiers deployed in places of imminent danger, said 1st Lt. Alok Chanani, commander, 413th Finance Detachment, a reserve unit from Puerto Rico supporting the Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

"Hostile fire pay is not prorated. If you spend one day in theater you should receive the entire monthly pay," added Sgt. 1st Class Jose Rivera, the detachment's noncommissioned officer in charge.

Hostile fire pay is not to be confused with hardship duty pay. Hardship duty pay is intended to compensate for undue adversity that Soldier's face, and is received by all Soldiers deployed in a combat zone.

"Hardship duty pay is \$100 a month but it is prorated. If you come to theater on Nov. 15 then you will only receive \$50 for that month," Chanani explained.

Something else to look for on your leave and earnings statement is Basic Allowance for Subsistence. BAS starts the day you leave your home station and ends the day you return. Enlisted Soldiers receive \$ 272.26 a month and officers receive \$187.49 a month.

All Soldiers need to make sure that no meal reductions show up on their LES during their deployment. Soldiers do not have to pay for meals down range, but they do give up the meal portion of per diem.

For the most part, single and married Soldiers receive the same pay while deployed with the exception of family separation pay.



(Photo by Pfc. Shea Butler, 7th MPAD)

Spc. Julio Larregui, a finance specialist with 413th Finance Detachment, a reserve unit from Puerto Rico supporting Multi-National Division - Baghdad, helps a Soldier with financial issues at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Married Soldiers get family \$8.33 a day, to compensate for forced separation from their dependents, starting from the day they leave their home station to the day they return, Rivera explained.

All Soldiers have a chance to cash in when they return from Iraq. Per diem is a travel allowance to cover expenses while traveling.

When Soldiers return to their home duty station they need to turn in travel vouchers to their supporting finance office to receive this per diem payment. Over the course of a year, that \$3.50 per day can add up, Chanani said.

Soldiers having any pay problems are encouraged to see their supporting finance office.

Cav mechanics adapt and over come in Iraq

Mechanics

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of his team. "Since we were at Camp Buehring [in Kuwait], they have been chopping at the bit to get over here and finally start working. I've run out of things for them to do; they are all over it."

Yet, Schulz credits the 4th BSTB mechanics for leaving their motor pool a lot better than they found it to be and attributes this as the single, biggest reason why his team has been working to put dead-lined vehicles back on the road, quickly installing humvee upgrades, and working on improving their working areas.

"This place is set up better than at Fort Hood [Texas]," he said.

Spc. John M. Zubek, a

track vehicle mechanic assigned to HHC, 4th BSTB, and a native of Los Angeles, said his team tried to provide as much help to the "new guys" as possible during the transition period.

"It's been working out great," he said. "They have more mechanics than we could have imagined, and we are more than willing to show them how to do things here."

Zubek said during his time in Iraq, he and his team developed their way of doing things. In most cases, it was new tools or new ways of using old tools.

"There are some small shortcuts to make stuff easier out here, and they [2nd BSTB mechanics] have been very insightful and asking questions when they have to," he said. "They are going to do really well. I'm sure by the time 1st

Cav. will have their replacements, they will have developed their own methods of doing things quicker."

For 2nd BSTB mechanics like Sgt. Juan Santibanez, an HHC, 2nd BSTB light-wheeled mechanic and the recovery noncommissioned officer-in-charge, many of his guys were not familiar with the M1114 up-armored humvee's transmission and air conditioning system.

"These guys, from the 4th STB, hooked it up for us," he said. "They came up with a plan, and that plan worked. So,

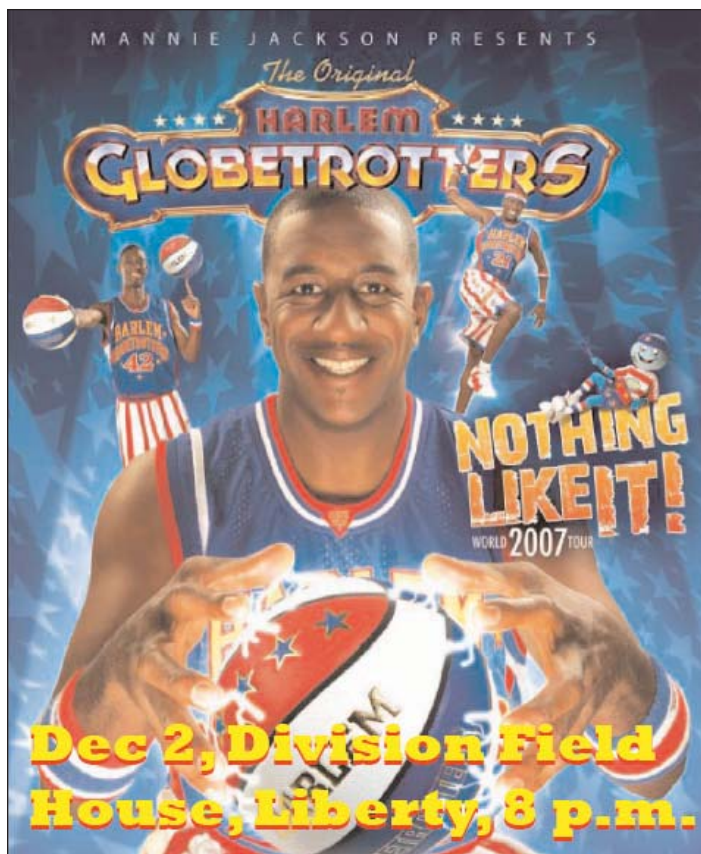
we've been following their SOPs (standing operating procedures)."

The 2nd BSTB mechanics were left with a maintenance shop capable of doing almost everything they need to perform their mission while in Iraq, according to Santibanez of Michoacan, Mexico. Yet, they have been using their talents and know-how to start small projects such as putting in working tables, pressure wash stations, and setting up communications satellites so they can stop sending carriers to send up manual reports.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2-1 Cavalry Public Affairs)

Spc. Loren Hayes, a track mechanic with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, does some welding work on a table at his new home base in Baghdad.



Soldiers spend Thanksgiving with their deployed family

By Cpl. Robert Yde
2-1 Cavalry Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq -- "Thanksgiving is always a big thing for us. It outdoes Christmas; it outdoes everything," Spc. Shelly Martinez, a food service specialist with the 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division explained before opening the doors of the dining facility at Forward Operating Base Falcon for the camp's Thanksgiving lunch.

The San Antonio native said that everyone involved with the DFAC, both Army personnel and the contracted workers from Kellogg, Brown and Root, spent a lot of extra time preparing decorations and food for the big day.

"It's been a lot of long, hard work - a lot of people working a lot of hours," she said, adding that she spent almost 20 hours Wednesday making last minute preparations.

The DFAC was adorned with red, orange, yellow and brown streamers hanging from the ceiling and decorative turkeys and cornucopias placed on tables throughout the building.

"Our theme is traditional Thanksgiving, but we put up what we had available," explained Warrant Officer Ruby Freeman, the food service technician for 15th BSB.

While the decor was very traditional, the menu was not. Thanksgiving staples such as candied yams, cornbread stuffing, pumpkin pie and of course turkey were available for Soldiers along with alternatives like roast beef, shrimp and crab.

"Menu wise, KBR has a standardized menu but they are allowed to enhance it," Freeman, a native of Hawaii's Big Island said, explaining the wide, and unusual, variety of food available.

The large assortment of food assured that most Soldiers found something they enjoyed noted Martinez, who added, "Everybody gets a little bit of what they like."

For many Soldiers, like Pfc. Joey Scott, who works in 15th BSB's Intelligence shop, this is their first Thanksgiving deployed, but they are mak-



(Photo by Cpl. Robert Yde, 2-1 Cavalry Public Affairs)

Col. Bryan Roberts, commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, serves roast beef to some of his Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Falcon's dining facility Thanksgiving Day.

ing the best out of it.

"It's going good," the Kelso, Wash. native said between bites of turkey and corn. "The chain-of-command is serving us, and it's pretty cool to see everybody here."

Kelso's supervisor, Sgt. Savannah Whicker said she was impressed with both the decor and the food.

"This is really nice, Whicker remarked. "It definitely gets you in the Thanksgiving spirit." However, Whicker said the one thing missing from the day was her family.

"If I was home I would be spending it with everyone in my family, piled into one room of the house with a table full of food," she said laughing.

Although she said she wishes she could be back in Evansville, Ind. with her family, she said she is happy to spend Thanksgiving with her fellow Soldiers.

"Everybody out here is kind of like a

family in itself. So I mean it's kind of similar," she explained. "Different surroundings obviously, but everybody is like a family here too."

Creating a sense of comfort and familiarity was one of the main driving forces behind all of the effort that the DFAC's staff put into all their hard work.

"Hopefully, at least, it will let other Soldiers feel at home," Martinez explained.

Martinez also said that being that Thanksgiving fell so soon after the brigade's arrival to Iraq, she felt that some Soldiers might have a harder time this year.

"Once they come in and see everything though," Martinez said, "I think it will make it a better Thanksgiving than they thought it would be."

With Thanksgiving now over, the DFAC staff at FOB Falcon can now focus on their next mission.

"After today," said Freeman, "it's Christmas."